

Tikrit University  
College of Education for Humanities  
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Subject: Essay

Class: 3<sup>rd</sup>

## PARALLISM AND SENTENCE PROBLEMS

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*Parallelism means that each item in a list or in a comparison follows the same grammatical pattern.* For example, if you are writing a list and the first item in your list is a noun, you write all the other items as nouns also. Or if the first item is an -ing word, you make all the others -ing words.

## PARALLEL STRUCTURE IN SENTENCES

There are certain rules that should be followed to make your writing easier to read.

NOT PARALLEL	PARALLEL
My English conversation class is made up of Chinese, Spaniards, and Bosnian students	My English conversation class is made up of <b>Chinese</b> , <b>Spanish</b> , and <b>Bosnian</b> students. (The items are all adjectives.)
The students who do well attend class, <b>they</b> do their homework, and practice speaking in English	The students who do well <b>attend class, do their homework, and practice speaking in English.</b> (The items are all verbs + complements.)
The teacher wanted to know which country we came from and our future goals	The teacher wanted to know <b>which country we were from</b> and <b>what our future goals were.</b> (The items are both noun clauses.)
The language skills of the students in the evening classes are the same as the day classes	<b>The language skills of the students in the evening classes</b> are the same as <b>the language skills of the students in the day classes.</b> (The items are both noun phrases.)

### Notes

- You may substitute a pronoun for the second "the language skills" here:

The language skills of the students in the evening classes are the same as those of the students in the day classes.

- All the words in the first item do not always have to be repeated in second. You may repeat all or some of the words, depending on what you wish to emphasize. Both sentences are correct.

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### **PARALLELISM WITH COORDINATORS: *AND, OR, BUT***

Words, phrases, and clauses that are joined by *and*, *or*, and *but* are written in parallel form. Notice the parallel structures joined by coordinators in the sentences.

The Federal Air Pollution Control Administration regulates automobile exhausts **and** the Federal Aviation Administration makes similar regulations for aircraft.

States regulate the noise created by motor vehicles **but** not by commercial aircraft.

Pesticides cannot be sold if they have a harmful effect on humans, on animal life, **or** on the environment.

### **PARALLELISM WITH CORRELATIVE (PAIRED) CONJUNCTIONS**

Use parallel forms with the paired conjunctions *both ... and*, *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, and *not only ... but also*.

Paired conjunctions are placed directly before the elements they join in the sentence. Notice the parallel structures in these clauses joined by paired conjunctions:

A new law provides for **both** regulating pesticides **and** ordering their removal.

Air pollutants may come **either** from the ocean as contaminants given off by sea life **or** from the engines of automobiles.

If **neither** industry **nor** the public works toward reducing pollution problems, future generations will suffer.

Many people are **neither** concerned about pollutants **nor** worried about their future impact.

At this time, air pollution is controlled by laws passed **not only** to reduce pollutants at the source, **but also** to set standards of air quality.

## SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

**Sentence fragments** are incomplete sentences or parts of sentences. Remember that complete sentence must contain at least one independent clause.

**FRAGMENT** Because some students work part-time while taking a full load of classes.

This is a dependent clause. It begins with a **subordinator** (because). It does not express a complete thought because there is no independent clause.

**There are two possible ways to correct this problem:-**

1. add an independent clause:

Because some students work part-time while taking a full load of courses, they have very little free time.

2. delete the subordinator:

Some students work part-time while taking a full load of classes.

## CHOPPY SENTENCES

**Choppy sentences** are sentences that are too short. Short sentences can be effective in certain situations. For instance, when you want to make an impact, use a short sentence.

In this example

A sentence of 25 words:- → Despite countless doctors' warnings, news stories, and magazine articles about the importance of eating a nutritious, balanced diet, many people resist developing healthy eating habits.

The second sentence has greater impact because it is so short.

sentence of 6 words → Some people just like junk food.

However, overuse of short sentences is considered poor style in academic writing.

Choppy sentences are easy to correct. Just combine two or three short sentences to make one compound or complex sentence. Your decision to make a compound or a complex sentence should be based on whether the ideas in the short sentences are equal or whether one idea is dependent on the other.

- If the sentences express equal ideas, use coordination to combine them.

### CHOPPY

- Wind is an enduring source of power.
- Water is also an unlimited energy source.
- Dams produce hydraulic power.
- They have existed for a long time. Windmills are relatively new.

**CORRECT** Both wind and water are enduring sources of power. Dams have produced hydraulic power for a long time, but windmills are relatively new.

- If the sentences express unequal ideas, that is, if one sentence expresses a less important idea than the other, use subordination to combine them.

**CHOPPY** We must find new sources of energy. Natural sources of energy are decreasing. Solar energy is a promising new source of energy. Solar energy is energy from the sun.

**CORRECT** We must find new sources of energy because natural sources of energy are dwindling. Solar energy, which is energy from the sun is a promising new source.

## RUN-ON SENTENCES AND COMMA SPLICES

**A run-on sentence** is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses are written one after another with no punctuation. A similar error happens when two independent clauses are incorrectly joined by a comma without a coordinating conjunction. This kind of error is called a comma splice.

**RUN-ON** My family went to Australia then they emigrated to Canada.

**COMMA SPLICE** My family went to Australia, then they emigrated to Canada.

**The ways to correct these two sentence errors are the same.**

- **Add a period:**

My family went to Australia. Then they emigrated to Canada.

- **Add a semicolon:**

My family went to Australia; then they emigrated to Canada.

- **Add a coordinator:**

My family went to Australia, **and** then they emigrated to Canada.

- **Add a subordinator:**

My family went to Australia **before** they emigrated to Canada.

**After** my family went to Australia, they emigrated to Canada.

## **STRINGY SENTENCES:**

A **stringy sentence** is a sentence with too many clauses, usually connected with *and*, *but*, *so*, and sometimes *because*. It often results from writing the way you speak, going on and on like a string without an end.

**STRINGY SENTENCES** To correct a stringy sentence, divide it and / or recombine the clauses, remembering to subordinate when appropriate.

**STRINGY** Many students attend classes all morning, and then they work all afternoon, and they also have to study at night, so they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

**CORRECT** Many students attend classes all morning and work all afternoon. **Since** they also have to study at night, so they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

**OR:**

**Because** many students attend classes all morning, work all afternoon, and study at night, they are usually exhausted by the weekend.